



Space Badge to Unite Cadre

Staff Sgt. Jennifer Thibault
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Air Force Space Command has developed a new space badge as part of Air Force Space Command senior leadership's continuing vision to unite the various command missions and specialties.

The space badge will replace the Space and Missile functional badge, as well as the missile operations occupational badge, currently worn by space professionals.

Recent emphasis on the topic of Space Professional Development set the stage for the release of the proposed badge and to implement the new, enduring symbol that communicates the unique role of space in military operations.

"One of our top priorities for Space Professional Development is to build a robust Cadre with a strong sense of 'space culture,'" said Air Force Space Command Commander, Gen. Lance W. Lord. "We are currently well under way with a number of career development initiatives to fulfill this goal; however, different specialty badges worn by members of the Air Force space community serve as a reminder we're not yet identifiable as one team."

The new badge is more inclusive and reflective of the entire Space Cadre as it will be awarded to personnel in the following space billets:

Space operations career fields, 13SX (officers) and 1C6XX (enlisted)

Scientific/research, 61XX

Developmental engineering, 62XX

Acquisition, 63XX

"As we continue to move

our Space Cadre forward in providing the best possible support to our Air Force mission, we must look for ways to unite the many outstanding men and women within the community of space professionals," said General Lord. "Just as pilots wear the same badge, whether they fly fighters, bombers, tankers or transports, all very distinct and different missions, our space cadre should wear the same badge to reflect the unity of their mission and capabilities."

The new badge is in line with the redesign of the Air Force symbol.

Reaction to the badge has been positive by those who are set to wear it.

"As the Air Force symbol changed to reflect a more modern, agile and technological advanced force, so does the new space badge," said Staff Sgt. Jerome Wesley, 21st Operations Support Squadron, who's been a space operator throughout his nine years in the service.

Some think the new badge design has a more operational feel to it.

"The new space badge is definitely distinctive and non-traditional," said Capt. Aaron Greaver, 21st Operations Support Squadron, whose missile background includes being a missile combat crew commander at the 321st Missile Squadron, F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo. "I think the new badge will stand out from the current functional and operational badges and present a more operational flavor."

The new badge maintains the heart of the current functional space and missile badge but has wing like protrusions on both sides, similar to "aviation

wings."

"I think there are similarities due to the wings displaying outward; however, there are enough differences in both not to get them confused with one another," said Sergeant Wesley.

Awarding of the new badge is also set to change slightly from current badges and is correlated to development of the new space professional education courses: Space 100, Space 200 and Space 300.

The basic space badge will be awarded one year after the member begins Space 100 course; Space 200 is required for wear of the senior space badge and Space 300 is required to wear the master space badge.

"The foundation for space professional development is a continuum of educational courses spread throughout one's career," said Col. James C. Hutto, Jr, AFSPC Chief of Force Development and Readiness. "These courses are designed to bring space professionals together several times during their careers in order to stay current on evolving missions, technologies and capabilities and to prepare the individual for the next level of responsibility."

There has been some apprehension about the discontinued wear of the missile operations occupational badge, especially by missileers who are proud of the heritage it symbolizes.

Although, Captain Greaver is supportive of the new space badge, he doesn't want to lose the pride he has in wearing his missile operations occupational badge.

"I am proud of our tradition," said Captain Greaver. "If wear of the missile badge were discontinued, it would be

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unfortunate."

General Lord shares his fellow missileers' regard for the sense of history behind the missile operations badge, as he's the longest serving ICBM officer on active duty. However, he hopes the new badge will unite all members of the space and missile career fields and will prove to be a symbol all can be proud to wear.

"Now more than ever, our Nation's security relies on space dominance. In that spirit, it is indeed time for the Space Cadre to become as recognizable as our other warfighting components," said General Lord. "We'll announce implementation procedures for the new badge very soon and hope to have it available for wear in early 2005."

Now that the badge has been approved, it will be another six to nine months before the badge is actually on the shelf. The badge still needs to be processed through the Air Force uniform board, Institute of Heraldry and be mass-produced by the manufacturers.

No date has been set for mandatory wear. Details will be announced soon.

The man behind the magic

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As Air Force Space Command senior leaders unveiled the new space and missile functional badge they are also applauding the efforts of the designer.

Staff Sgt. Colin "Mark" Loring, NCOIC of AFSPC Multimedia, found his inspiration for the new badge in other Air Force functional badges, shields and even the wings from the Harley Davidson logo.

"I initially created multiple wings and symbols," said Sergeant Loring. "I created some traditional [designs] and some that were more cutting edge or futuristic."

The original request for the badge designs came in April with the final design ready and approved by senior leaders by the fall.

"The majority of my time was spent making adjustments to the original designs," said Sergeant Loring.

The project was a fun challenge for the graphics illustrator who says this is all a part of his job.

The new space badge will replace the current space and missile functional badges currently worn by space professionals and is hoped to be an enduring symbol that communicates the role of space in military operations.

With all of the attention surrounding the unveiling, Sergeant Loring is getting lots of time in the spotlight.

"I don't like attention so this should be interesting," said the humble sergeant.

The new badge will take six-nine months before it is produced in sufficient quantities to be on AAFES Clothing Sales Stores shelves.



Represented above is the master level space badge. Like other Air Force badges, it will also include a senior version with star only and a basic version with no star or wreath. The badge and qualification criteria are pending formal approval and will be announced soon.